

many groups as possible from man-power control measures, the Department was keeping steadily in view of the desire to curtail, and ultimately to avoid altogether, the necessity for compulsory direction.

325. A few days after the surrender of Japan further substantial relaxations over a very wide field were announced. These relaxations included the exemption from further liability for direction of—

(a) All married women irrespective of age. These also received automatic consent to leave essential industries if they desired to take up home duties.

(b) All other women of thirty years of age or over.

(c) All men of forty-five years of age or over.

326. In the two latter groups applications for permission to terminate essential employment still had to be made, and these were dealt with on their merits as previously. It will be observed that by this date (18th August, 1945) the only persons who, in addition to those in the two latter groups, were not receiving automatic consent to terminate were unmarried women aged eighteen to twenty-nine years inclusive and men (except returned servicemen) aged eighteen to forty-four years inclusive. The steady cancellation of declarations of essentiality reduced the number of essential undertakings, and this also progressively reduced the numbers of persons subject to man-power control.

327. At the same time as the above relaxations were announced employers in both essential and non-essential undertakings were freed from the requirement to obtain the consent of the District Man-power Officer prior to engaging persons in the following classes, providing they notified the District Man-power Officer within seven days of the engagement :—

(a) Persons under eighteen years of age.

(b) Widows of servicemen.

(c) Women who were thirty years of age or over.

(d) Married women.

(e) Returned servicemen of the present war.

(f) Men who were forty-five years of age or over.

328. The only persons in respect of whom employers still had to obtain prior permission to engage were single women aged eighteen to twenty-nine years and men (except returned servicemen) aged eighteen to forty-four years inclusive.

An acceleration in the revocation of declarations of essentiality as already outlined in this section was maintained, and all girls attaining the age of eighteen years were exempted from the requirement to register.

329. It is estimated that within six weeks of the surrender of Japan upwards of 200,000 persons had been affected by the above exemptions. That the exemptions had been stretched as far as possible at that point was apparent from minor staffing difficulties which appeared in certain industries as a result. Those difficulties, however, did not reach any serious proportions, and the extent of the relaxation granted was proved to be justifiable.

330. The pool of labour subject to direction had been reduced until it included at the end of August only single women aged eighteen to twenty-nine years inclusive, and men, other than returned servicemen, aged eighteen to forty-four years inclusive. A careful examination of the position showed that this pool was only just sufficient to meet the more urgent continuing needs of industries which were retaining their declarations of essentiality.

331. For the next two months relaxations took the form of revocation of declarations at a greatly increased rate consistent with the requirements of high priority industry.

332. The operation of the Employment Restriction Order was further curtailed at the end of November, when it became no longer necessary for essential undertakings to obtain the prior consent of the District Man-power Officer to the engagement of new labour provided the engagement was notified to the District Man-power Officer within